



Potomac River Basin Drinking Water Source Protection Partnership

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News Release

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Potomac River Partnership Endorses Drinking Water Protection Plan

Laurel, Md. - The Potomac River Basin Drinking Water Source Protection Partnership met last week to review their plans to protect drinking water sources. Leaders of water utilities from throughout the District of Columbia metropolitan area and several state and federal agencies convened at the Laurel, Md. headquarters of the Washington Suburban Sanitary Commission.

The gathering was called to gauge the group's progress in the first year since they entered an agreement to work together to protect the drinking water source for more than four million people. "We need to better understand potential threats to our water supplies. This Partnership has begun important work to help us understand those threats," said Charles M. Murray, Executive Officer of Fairfax Water, the new chair of the DWSP Partnership.

The partnership has adopted a strategic plan for protecting drinking water sources in the Potomac Basin. It has also organized technical workshops, pulling together national experts in such fields as pathogenic sources of contamination and emerging contaminants in drinking water sources.

Jon Capacasa, Director of EPA's Mid-Atlantic Water Protection Division, said "This is a worthy challenge. We know Americans are concerned about the quality of their drinking water, and we can all see the benefits of water protection—in terms of health, treatment cost savings and additional benefits to the environment. Each of the partners—all levels of government, all sizes of water suppliers—will be more effective because the others are there, too."

"Preventing pollution from reaching the sources of our drinking water is not only a good common sense action, but is also economically, environmentally and technically prudent," said WSSC General Manager Andrew Brunhart. "It is a major challenge. The Partnership is working

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together for meaningful change.”

The partnership’s goal is to identify present and future threats to the Potomac River as well as means to provide greater protection to the more than four million consumers whose drinking water is drawn from the Potomac basin. Recently completed assessments have identified critical supply areas and potential contaminant sources for all the public water systems in the watershed. The Partnership has brought together researchers and technical and regulatory experts in several fields to help in defining priority actions.

The partnership is focusing on pathogens, future chemical contaminant concerns, and improved water monitoring, as well as broadening participation within the watershed. “It is important to realize that protecting the quality of the drinking water resource is a team effort,” said Thomas Jacobus, Chief of the Washington Aqueduct, the drinking water treatment facility for Washington, DC and several northern Virginia communities.

Established in September of 2004, the partnership comprises community water systems that derive all or a portion of their drinking water supply from the waters of the Potomac River Basin. Currently, the utility membership includes the Cities of Frederick, Hagerstown, and Rockville, Maryland; Frederick and Washington Counties in Maryland; the Town of Leesburg, Virginia; Fairfax Water; the Washington Aqueduct Division of the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers; and the Washington Suburban Sanitary Commission.

Also included among the 19 members are state regulatory agencies from Maryland, Virginia, West Virginia, and Pennsylvania, along with the District of Columbia. The U. S. Environmental Protection Agency, U. S. Geological Survey and the Interstate Commission on the Potomac River Basin are also partners. Other agencies and organizations will be enlisted to join the partnership in the coming year.

Members:

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| City of Hagerstown, Maryland City of Rockville, Maryland City of Frederick, Maryland Fairfax Water Frederick County, Maryland Interstate Commission on the Potomac River Basin Maryland Department of the Environment Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Protection Town of Leesburg, Virginia U.S. Environmental Protection Agency | U.S. Geological Survey Virginia Department of Environmental Quality Virginia Department of Health Washington Aqueduct Washington County, Maryland Washington, D.C. Department of Health Washington Suburban Sanitary Commission West Virginia Department of Environmental Protection West Virginia Department of Health and Human Resources |
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